



# THE NARROWER PATH

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*Walking with Christ  
in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*

**MICHAEL J LEDEE**

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Walking with Christ in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Michael J Ledee II



The Narrower Path – Walking with Christ in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (V 1.0)  
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Edited by: Michael J Ledee II & Mia Ledee  
Cover Design: Michael J Ledee II & Michael J Ledee III

# FOREWORD

MagnifAI is an initiative created by Goshen House, a ministry dedicated to providing believers in Yeshua (Jesus) with resources that cultivate a deeper relationship with the Holy Spirit, enabling them to be His witnesses in the last days. One cannot be mindful of the end times without considering how artificial intelligence is shaping the future. To address this necessary topic, magnifAI aims to equip Christians to harness artificial intelligence for the glory of God, guided by God's wisdom.

I chose to title this book *The Narrower Path*, inspired by Yeshua's (Jesus') words from His Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 7:13-14, He tells us to "enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." Most English translations describe the path to eternal life as difficult, narrow, compressed, and restricted. It paints a picture of a narrow walkway, surrounded by thorns, rocks, and other hazards that require constant vigilance. As Christians, we traverse a challenging road as we labor daily to follow Yeshua.

As if this path weren't difficult enough, artificial intelligence narrows it even further, as this short book aims to reveal. New threats are appearing on every side of our journey. If we choose to use AI technology and do not employ great discernment, we risk being lured off the path of life.

For those seeking to know more about implementing AI usage with Godly wisdom, this book is a great place to start. Within these pages, you'll find essential considerations that we, as Christians, must consider deeply and take to the Lord in prayer. Read these topics by yourself and with your loved ones. Discuss and pray through them. Doing so will help you to begin a much-needed conversation with your loved ones and with the Lord.

Due to the profound importance of this subject, I have committed to making this e-book free forever. I believe no barrier should exist for anyone who wishes to learn more about artificial intelligence and walking with Yeshua. I pray this work strengthens your spirit and heart to remain grounded in the truth of God, as earthly success provides opportunity for you to take flight.

-Michael J. Ledee II

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# INTRODUCTION

Let me first emphasize that this book was written by a human, not a computer. You have my word on that.

It should be no surprise that it seems we are living in the last days. When you consider the events unfolding worldwide, it feels as if the Lord should return at any moment. Paul describes what the days leading up to the second coming of Christ will look like, saying men will be “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power” (2 Timothy 3:1-5). Does that not accurately describe the general mentality of our society today?

If you are a Christian, you probably already know that the human heart is deceitfully wicked at its core. Yet, the development of technology has contributed to humanity’s ability to unleash more evil and destroy itself even faster. Don’t get me wrong; technology in and of itself is not inherently bad. But like any tool, it can be used for evil or good. Innovation allows us to sin more easily, masking the consequences (at least in this world). For example, before the advent of the camera, the closest someone could come to a pornographic image was that of a drawing made by hand. Decades later, these images could be found in full-color magazines that were mass-produced by printers. Today, it only takes a few taps on a phone to access an image or video of whatever your heart desires and hide it conveniently in your pocket. The creation of artificial intelligence amplifies these possibilities, unlike anything before it.

Due to AI’s concerns, we might simply ignore it and dismiss it entirely. This tendency to resist change is especially true among us as Christian people (who are totally correct in our thinking to accept new things reluctantly). We understand that much of what the world offers contradicts the Kingdom of God; therefore, we must be cautious. Maybe we think to ourselves, “What’s the big deal? This fad will probably pass in the coming years anyway. Maybe, I’ll watch how this plays out over time and decide later on if I want to get involved.” Generally speaking, this is not an unwise mentality to have. For example, it wouldn’t have mattered much if you decided to wait a few years and not buy into the internet in 1999 or smartphones until 2020. However, artificial intelligence presents an urgency that demands our attention.

This is due to the speed at which change is taking place. I would argue that if you choose to wait on the sidelines for a few years to decide if you want to start tinkering around with AI, you (and your children) are more than likely to be severely left behind. Currently, AI is already reshaping the employment landscape. Industries that have been established for generations are being transformed overnight. Skilled trades that people have spent years earning degrees and mastering are also disappearing. Not only are these changes happening quickly, but the *rate of change* is also increasing exponentially. It may sound like I’m exaggerating, but I promise you that I’m not. Research it for yourself.

I am not the only person who believes this. Experts in the technology field have made similar statements about the transformative effects of AI. For example, some have made the bold claim that artificial

intelligence will be the last invention humanity has to come up with. Seems far-fetched? Think about the gravity of that statement for a moment. Suppose people have created something that can develop ideas, design machines, revolutionize technologies, or anything else, for that matter. Do humans need to create anything from scratch anymore? Machines are now able to do the thinking for us. The possibilities are daunting, which can be good, but are also terrifying. Again, man is capable of great good and extreme evil. Even though we tend to do more evil than good, how do we know if we should utilize this technology, and if so, how?

This is precisely the warning Yeshua (Jesus) gave His disciples. As He sent them out into the world, He instructed them, “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16). He also put it this way: we are to be in the world, yet not of it (John 17:24). The Spirit’s wisdom for the first-century believers (and for us today) was to be discerners of good and evil, assessing situations for opportunities and hazards. We are to seize the opportunities while avoiding the hazards. Just as it was possible for the disciples to enter the Gentile region of the Decapolis and not partake in their pagan ways, we can use platforms like Facebook as a beacon of light for the Lord while not getting sucked into the negativity of social media.

The only way to navigate these challenges is through the guidance of the Spirit of God. Great power requires great wisdom. Those who choose to use AI with wisdom can leverage its ability to wield incredible power to benefit their personal lives and the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. Conversely, misuse can lead to significant harm, impacting oneself or others. For the one person who can utilize artificial intelligence for good, there may be a thousand others who use it to fulfill their selfish desires at the expense of others. This technology accelerates humanity’s ability to fulfill Paul’s words in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 at breakneck speed. Again, discretion is needed.

Living in a world where the implementation of artificial intelligence continues to gain traction and affect our daily lives is becoming increasingly challenging. How can we walk with the Lord as these changes unfold so quickly? How do we discern how/if we are to use this technology? How do we equip the next generation to seek Godly wisdom over easy material success? These are just a few of the many questions we must consider *now*. It is my conviction that we as Christians can (and should) utilize this technology for our livelihood and to further the Kingdom through the opportunities AI creates. While this may not be your conviction, I only ask that you consider praying about it with an open and teachable spirit. However, I will adamantly say that any usage of AI must only occur through the continual guidance of the Holy Spirit. I cannot stress this enough.

Despite my convictions, this work does not seek to encourage or detract from your use of AI. My goal is for you to begin thinking about this crucial issue with an open mind and ask God for direction before it’s too late. I only aim to offer points of concern for Christians considering using it. I hope you will prayerfully consider how (or if) you and your family should integrate AI into your lives. Invite the Holy Spirit to walk with you on this journey. I genuinely believe He will speak to those of us who are seeking His perfect guidance in these last days as the path of God continues to narrow.

## THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

*Proverbs 2 - My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints. Then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path. When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, discretion will preserve you; understanding will keep you, to deliver you from the way of evil, from the man who speaks perverse things, from those who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness; who rejoice in doing evil, and delight in the perversity of the wicked; whose ways are crooked, and who are devious in their paths; to deliver you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words, who forsakes the companion of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God. For her house leads down to death, and her paths to the dead; none who go to her return, nor do they regain the paths of life—so you may walk in the way of goodness, and keep to the paths of righteousness. For the upright will dwell in the land, and the blameless will remain in it; but the wicked will be cut off from the earth, and the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.*

As you read this Proverb, meditate upon how many times the words *way* or *path* are mentioned. In this chapter, the path of God is described as the way of justice, righteousness, discretion, uprightness, and goodness. The path is described as pleasant and that which leads to life. It is contrasted to the crooked way of evil, darkness, immorality, and death. For those who possess the wisdom of God, the Lord guards them from deviating from His path by directing them away from the one that leads to death. This imagery resonates with what Yeshua (Jesus) teaches in Matthew 7:13-14. Interestingly, in the early days of the Church, Christianity was referred to as “The Way.” According to Scripture, the difference between the path of life and the path of death lies in the knowledge and wisdom of God. This is where our journey on the path must begin.

*Proverbs 1:7 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

*Psalms 111:10 - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments.*

What is the knowledge of the fear of the Lord? It is the profound truth that one God is enthroned in the heavens, the Creator and Ruler over the universe. He is infinite, immutable, self-sufficient, omnipotent,

omniscient, and omnipresent. Moreover, He is entirely faithful, good, just, merciful, gracious, and loving. He is worthy of all praise, honor, and glory. He rewards those who pursue righteousness and punishes doers of evil, and we each must face the inevitable truth that we will come face-to-face with Him one day. If you have received Yeshua as your Lord and Savior, God is your eternal and perfect Father, resulting in your sinful acts being completely forgiven.

The Apostle Paul prays that God's children attain all riches of the full assurance of understanding and knowledge. He states that within the Father and Yeshua are "hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2-3).

The Prophet Isaiah describes the Messiah as follows in Isaiah 11:1-2: "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

So we can see that the wisdom and knowledge of God the Father are revealed in the person of Christ. This is where we must begin: meditating and patterning our lives upon Yeshua's example. Here lies the path to obtain true wisdom.

#### Reflection:

- Is a healthy fear/reverence for God the foundation for your relationship with Him?
- When you envision meeting the Lord face-to-face one day, describe how that makes you feel. Are you ready for that moment?
- How intentional is your family in learning from Yeshua's earthly life and following His perfect example?

## THE CONDITION OF THE HEART

Some believe that as knowledge increases, all of the problems of our world will be resolved, and we will form a utopian society. This hypothesis is being preached by some in the AI community. It is undoubtedly true that knowledge brings many benefits to humanity. Consider the great good that fields of medicine, communication, and transportation have brought to the world just in the past century. Increased knowledge can also create an opportunity for financial success through employment or business opportunities. However, the disconnect with the belief that knowledge solves all problems is the fact that the human heart is inherently wicked.

*Jeremiah 17:9 - The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*

*Romans 1:29-31 - [Humans are described as] being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful.*

A thief who becomes educated will only become a more effective thief if he continues to have a heart to steal. A murderer who gains knowledge will only become a more cunning killer if he continues to have a heart to murder. Both must realize their actions have consequences now and in eternity. Unless someone develops a fear of the Lord and their wicked behavior changes as a result, the condition of the human heart is one that an accumulation of information alone cannot solve.

At the core of every heart is selfish desire. From this inherent heart condition, we are unable to produce any true good since selfish motives influence our behavior. In order to leave this path of self-gratification, we must be remade from within.

*John 3:3 - Unless one is born again (born from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

The new birth comes from God alone. No amount of knowledge or good works can create a new heart in us. The only way we can obtain this supernatural transformation is to humble ourselves, repent of our sinful ways, and accept Yeshua (Jesus) as Lord and Savior.

*Acts 2:38-39 - Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ [Yeshua] for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."*

When we receive the Holy Spirit, we are given a new heart.

*Ezekiel 36:26-27 - I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.*

As a result, our new heart gives us the desire to do the will of God. The transformation puts even the vilest of men on a path of becoming more like Yeshua, if they are willing to submit to His instruction and follow Him. The new heart provides the supernatural ability and joy to deny self and serve others, producing good works as a fountain naturally produces clean water. This fountain of life in us is evidence of the presence of the indwelling Spirit of God, echoing Jeremiah 2:13, where God describes Himself as “the fountain of living water.”

*John 4:13 - Whoever drinks of the water that I [Yeshua] shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.*

Can knowledge be used to benefit humanity? Most certainly. However, no quantity of knowledge can educate man enough to cleanse his heart and create pure, selfless motivations. If the condition of the heart is inherently wicked, the work which man produces will always be mingled with sin. Despite what the wisest men of our age might claim, AI cannot fix the problem inherent to humanity. True change can only be accomplished by Yeshua. We all need the new birth, which only comes from the Holy Spirit. The fountain of living water that comes from God the Father alone is found in the person of Christ. This fountain changes us from the inside and empowers us to walk with Yeshua and make the types of decisions He would if He were standing in our place. When such powerful tools are at our fingertips, this is the only way we must proceed: with the heart of God in us. We must continually pray to remain connected to Him to keep the waters of His fountain pure.

Reflection:

- Reflect on your life before and after salvation, when you received Yeshua as Lord and Savior. Describe how your desires have changed.
- Do you believe any amount of knowledge could have transformed your heart in the way the Holy Spirit has?
- Recall a time you performed a “good” work for a self-serving reason and contrast that to a similar work done with pure motives from the Holy Spirit. Was the quality/outcome of each work the same or different? Why?

## VISION

Before one step of progress can take place, the vision must be established. Vision determines our purpose, course, and direction. It contains our aspirations and is future-focused, guiding each step we take daily. Gaining a clear vision is the vital first step before embarking on our life journey. Consider how multi-billion-dollar companies will develop “vision statements” that, in a single sentence, encapsulate a laser-focused description of their identity and what they intend to accomplish. The vision statement determines company policy, sales goals, and how millions of dollars will be spent.

Similarly, a ship captain with a map in hand and navigational equipment can make slight adjustments to the ship’s wheel, steering a massive vessel towards its predetermined destination. The experienced operator of an excavator, knowledgeable of the site plan for the construction project, will expend little effort to push on a lever that delivers thousands of pounds of pressure to its bucket. Knowing the objective empowers both individuals to make small yet impactful actions, enabling them to successfully accomplish the immense tasks they have been given.

In an even more profound way, the people of God need vision. *You need a vision.* You need to know where you see yourself in the future and what impact you intend to make in the world for the Kingdom of God. A lack of vision will be catastrophic to you and to those whom God has determined for you to impact with your gifts.

*Proverbs 29:18 - Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint.*

There may be some obscurity in the translation of this verse that requires clarification of what’s truly being said. *Revelation*, in this context, speaks of prophetic revelation, or vision from the Lord. Oftentimes, this is the same word used to describe the vision the prophets of God were given as they were commissioned to guide the Israelites back on the path of obedience and holiness. The phrase *cast off restraint* depicts situations where order is abandoned, leading to chaos or moral decline. Therefore, another way to translate this verse is as follows: “Where there is no vision from God, the outcome will be confusion and moral shipwreck.”

Yeshua (Jesus) has given the Church its vision/objective:

*Matthew 28:19-20 - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.*

The Great Commission embodies the overarching vision for each Christian. Certainly, all disciples of Christ are called to be witnesses of the Gospel to the world. But in what way? What does this look like in the individual life of each believer? Not everyone is destined to be a missionary or evangelist, as the Apostle Paul was. If God has not called you to be a pastor of a mega church, this does not make your purpose any

less significant. We are all called to be faithful to whatever we have been entrusted with, whether small or great.

*Ephesians 2:10 - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus [Yeshua] for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.*

It is incredible to consider that God, in His infinite wisdom and perfection, has predestined a path of good works for us to walk in. He knew us before we were formed in our mother's womb and wrote our life's story ahead of time. He looks down from heaven in love as each detail of His plan unfolds in our lives. Imagine what would be the result of each one of us being aware of God's plan and seeking daily to see that His desires were accomplished through us.

So, this is the question we must ask the Lord, "What is it that I have been called to do for You?"

There is only one way to have this question answered: we must ask the Lord and patiently wait for His answer from heaven. We cannot have this question answered by anyone (or anything) else. In our fast-paced world, waiting on the Lord does not come easily to us. Whenever we have a question, we desire to have it answered clearly and immediately. Our impatience may cause us to seek an answer to the crucial question of our vision outside of prayer.

Vision, however, is not something that can be outsourced to anyone, especially a computer. It may be tempting, and extremely easy to ask a chatbot, "What should I do with my life?" and receive numerous flesh-pleasing responses. This tendency is especially true of the youth today. Unfortunately, many young people have no direction and want answers immediately. They might wish to do something impactful, but don't know what exactly that is. This is a question God alone must answer for each of us individually. Often, the answer does not come at the speed of pressing the enter key. In addition, the vision from God will probably be challenging, which might also deter someone seeking an easier and more glamorous path. As the verse from Proverbs states, vision that does not originate with God will lead to inevitable destruction.

If there is one thing worthy of prayer, it is at this very point. So much hangs in the balance if we don't take the time and diligently seek our purpose. Our acceptance and faith in the sacrifice of Yeshua have placed a distant finish line before us. God has determined a purpose for each of us to accomplish. He has ordained good works for us to walk in. Therefore, we must pray earnestly for our vision from the start of our journey and continually as the journey unfolds. Doing so will ensure that we remain grounded in the Truth and enable us to make any necessary readjustments along the way to remain on course.

Reflection:

- Has God given you a clear vision of His purpose for your life? Have you taken time to pray about this? Can you look back on progress that has been made?
- Do you have a moral dilemma receiving your vision/direction in life from AI? Consider why or why not.
- How/should AI help you (or your family) to clarify your God-given vision?



## SALVATION OVER SUCCESS

Today, when parents wish to speak highly of their children, they tend first to mention their good grades in school, athletic ability, or level of intelligence. Though we might not realize it, our culture has trained us to prioritize success in this life over having a pure heart for God. Consider that if a child has a heart for the Lord, he will work hard at all he does by default. However, there is no guarantee that the child who works hard will have a heart for the Lord. If we are not careful, we can lead our children astray by this line of thinking.

*Matthew 16:26-27 - For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*

Due to the increasingly competitive nature of our world, we might be tempted to go to any lengths to ensure our child's success. However, we must not do so at the expense of their soul. Before we expose our children to AI technology, we must pray for God to reveal if their hearts are ready to navigate its use wisely. If not, it will be more profitable for us to delay their exposure to it until their character is ready. Their success in the world's eyes might be hindered for now, but their eternal destinies have a better chance of being spared from hellfire. As parents, we must be living examples, teaching our children to prize the wisdom of God above all else.

*Matthew 13:44-46 - Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

When we understand the value of what the Kingdom offers, we will do whatever it takes to acquire it. Contrast this mindset to that of Esau as it is summarized in the Book of Hebrews:

*Hebrews 12:16-17 - Lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.*

This is indeed one of the saddest stories in the Bible. Esau was the firstborn son of Isaac, a man entitled to much but who failed to recognize the value in the blessings associated with his inheritance. The word *profane* in verse sixteen actually means worldly or godless in Greek. If we are not careful, an earthly and godless mindset will tempt us to make a similar decision to Esau's: trading the treasure in the field or the pearl of great price for that which will rust or can be stolen.

Are we willing to forsake all for what the Kingdom of Heaven offers? We will easily do so when our hearts are convinced that the guidance of God's presence is more valuable than anything on earth. But what must we do with this conviction? What if we also desire our children to value Godly wisdom and knowledge? First, we must pray for them and ourselves. Secondly, our children must learn to ask for it from God themselves. Finally, we must keep asking!

*Luke 11:9-13 - So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*

*James 1:5 - If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

God eagerly awaits teaching those who are ready to learn His ways. All we need to do is seek and ask with sincerity. As parents, we must determine to instill the following principle into the hearts of our children: success in this life must come secondary to success in the Kingdom. We must call upon Yeshua (Jesus), the source of all wisdom, to hold our hands while we walk out the path of our lives, keeping our eyes fixed on eternity.

Reflection:

- What holds a higher priority for you and your family: having a pure heart for God or achieving success in this world?
- Do we truly view the wisdom of God as a priceless treasure? How diligently do you ask and seek for His wisdom and guidance?
- What can we do to ensure our families remain committed to God first, even at the potential cost of success in the eyes of the world?
-

## GODLY PURPOSE

Many people are motivated to seek financial success, sometimes at any cost. The temptation might be to chase the latest trends for profit and possibly even compromise morality to do so. There may be little to no concern with making the world a better place in the wake of their success. As Christians, we might tend to look down on people who prioritize material gain. While it is true that the drive to achieve prosperity might be fueled by pride, our discussion will focus on those who walk this path out of fear or anxiety.

To those with a heart for God, it is unfortunate how life's challenges can cause us to stray so far from His way. If you are a breadwinner or a head of household, the responsibility to provide always seems like a looming concern in the back of your mind. Questions such as "What if I lose my job?" or "What if I can't pay the mortgage?" might rear their ugly head often. These fears can drive us to respond irrationally or make choices we wouldn't usually make.

Many factors challenge the stability of the lifestyle we all seek. Just to name a few, more individuals and families are being emotionally crushed by factors such as inflation or employment instability. Another emerging concern, which to some degree is already here, is the unprecedented restructuring artificial intelligence is causing in the job market and the world. Due to the pressures we all face to provide for our families and prepare our children for the future, many of God's people are consumed with worry.

Be that as it may, as Christians, we cannot allow our fears to determine the course. Our earthly needs must not permit us to live lives of compromise. Consider how the multitudes Yeshua (Jesus) preached to experienced very similar challenges. Difficulties like food scarcity, extreme poverty, medical needs, and Roman occupation were of daily concern to them. Not knowing where their next meal was coming from or if they would live to see another day was a genuine concern.

Despite these difficulties, this was Yeshua's advice to those of His time and to us:

*Matthew 6:31-33 - Therefore do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

Most Christians are familiar with this passage. Prior to these verses, Yeshua explains that since the birds of the air and the grass of the field don't have to worry about being taken care of, we, who are loved so much more by God, have even more reason not to worry. While His words are one hundred percent true and sound uplifting, behaving like they are true is easier said than done when urgent needs are beating on your door.

So, how can we bridge the gap between this truth presented by Yeshua and our everyday reality? Solomon's words offer further insight into what Yeshua taught:

*Proverbs 3:5-10 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones. Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.*

We must pay attention to the chain reaction that occurs once we order our steps according to this passage of Proverbs. First, we must trust His way and not have confidence in our "wisdom." Oftentimes, it's our "wisdom" that leads us astray. By placing our dependence upon God first, we receive the right direction for our way. In return, God blesses us with physical and spiritual strength for the journey. With what He has given us, we then give back freely to God in the form of charity. By being a blessing, He blesses us abundantly more. This is precisely what Yeshua taught: if we continue to seek the Kingdom of God first, we will be provided for.

Here is another warning we must heed: we cannot simply seek God to secure personal gain. This is a place where many of us might be guilty. We turn to God in times of need, neglecting Him in times of abundance. The foundational reason we should seek Him is because He first sought us. Our thankfulness for what He has done for us through Yeshua produces worship as a result. While there's nothing wrong with asking, He is a good Father who knows the needs of His children even before they ask.

*Luke 11:11-13 - If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*

As a good Father, God especially has a heart for those in need. This is precisely why Yeshua came to earth: to save those who were helpless and could not save themselves. He has been immeasurably gracious to us. Likewise, we are to be the hands and feet of Yeshua to others. This is especially true of those who are in the direst circumstances. When we join in with the work of our Father, it brings Him great joy.

*Matthew 25:37-40 - The righteous will answer Him, saying, "Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."*

As the children of God, it is our duty and honor to join in the work of God. We cannot allow ourselves to enjoy the fruit of the covenant and not serve God with whom we are in covenant. Being preoccupied with earthly success will prevent our hearts from looking upward to the time when the eternality of our works will be tested with holy fire. We must also pray for God to use us as an instrument to bless others. Ask Him to make a way for you to have more time to serve. Pray for Him to increase your finances so you can support churches and missions spreading the Gospel. I believe God is eager to bless people with generous hearts who have a heart for spreading light and helping those in need.

Users of artificial intelligence can achieve financial success more easily and quickly than ever before, which, by itself, is not bad. But will you remain focused on the big picture? There are many stories of people who were preoccupied with money, and when they suddenly came into large sums of it, the love of money destroyed their lives. Success can create the potential for becoming distracted from what truly matters to God. Therefore, we must remain in prayer for how to leverage these powerful tools for good. From the start, we must remember to use our success for good and never use this technology for any purpose opposed to the Kingdom of God.

Reflection:

- Identify at least one time when you were tempted to compromise your morals for the sake of financial gain. What decision did you ultimately make?
- Do you currently allocate a portion of your income to tithes, charity, or supporting missionaries? If so, describe how you came to that decision and if it was difficult.
- If you were to receive a large sum of money, do you think you'd be able to manage it in a responsible way that glorifies God?

## DECEPTION

It all started in the Garden of Eden. In the beginning, humanity enjoyed the unrestricted presence of God and all that it includes. Every need imaginable (and those beyond our imagination) was met: health, comfort, peace, joy, and love, to name a few. When we are in His presence, the temptation to sin fades, since no greater joy in the universe can compare to what is felt when we are in close communion with God. This was Adam and Eve's experience: walking hand-in-hand with their Creator, awestruck with childlike amazement over His creation. The problems started when they turned their eyes from their walk with God, and their hearts began to consider things that were off His path.

*Genesis 3:1, 5 - And he [the serpent] said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'...For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

As Eve strayed from the presence of God, suddenly, there was a shiny new object that appeared more glorious: relative knowledge. Eve forgot that God was the only One who is the determiner of good and evil. He created the universe and established its laws. He is our Creator and knows us better than we know ourselves. Therefore, He has the authority to decree moral law, not mankind. The serpent offered Eve the freedom to choose apart from God, based on her limited perspective. After she indulged in the fruit, she became wise in her own eyes.

*James 1:14-15 - But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

The further away we are from God's presence, the more foreign His truth appears. Yeshua (Jesus) taught that the virtues of the Kingdom stand entirely opposite to those of the earth. This is why the wisdom of God appears as foolishness to men. The enemy's voice seems more prominent, attractive, and gratifying to our flesh, promising immense pleasure to those who listen to him. It is like a fish mesmerized by a fat, juicy worm, blind to the hook that it's concealing. Just as it was true with Adam and Eve, listening to the enemy's voice brings us to the path of death.

Scripture promises great deception as we approach the end of days.

*2 Thessalonians 2:11 - God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

In this chapter of 2 Thessalonians, Paul describes the future Antichrist, whom he refers to as the lawless one, who works according to the works of Satan. As was true in the Garden of Eden, deception originates from Satan, the father of lies.

It is remarkable to consider that technology currently exists that can replicate voices, photos, and videos, making it appear that someone has said or done something they actually haven't. The sheer quantity of data AI can generate has caused information to increase exponentially. A flood of lies can be perpetuated as truth, even threatening to deceive the elect of God. Though He is still present amidst the noise of the world, the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit is becoming more challenging to hear. The need for the wisdom of God has never been greater than it is today.

Those most at risk during this age of mass deception are the youth. They have access to great quantities of information, and generally, they lack the wisdom of God to guide their journeys.

*Job 12:12 - Wisdom is with aged men, and with length of days, understanding.*

Most traditional cultures place high honor on older individuals due to this fact. Older people have great experience, which is viewed as a priceless contribution to their societies. However, in modern cultures like America, youth is valued, and the aged are looked down upon. What is highly prized is beauty, success, riches, and power, the same sins which caused Satan to rebel against God and be cast out of heaven. Artificial intelligence boasts a path to achieve all those things, with little effort and with great speed.

The ability to achieve success, in and of itself, is not evil. AI is simply an extremely potent tool, and with that power comes great wisdom on how to wield it. For instance, someone might be tempted to rely heavily on AI to write emails or compose reports for convenience, but when the time comes to speak to someone face to face, they might stumble putting their thoughts together without AI assistance. Just as a powerful drug like Oxycodone can do good when properly administered, when dosed incorrectly, it can cause addiction or death.

Our strongest defense against the enemy's lies is continually immersing ourselves in God's Word and seeking His presence. Doing so requires dedication and intentionality. We cannot automate or outsource planting God's truth in our hearts. We must commit to creating space in our lives to hear the voice of God and walk in his ways if we are to successfully navigate these increasingly dark times.

Reflection:

- In your walk with the Lord, describe a time that you were tempted, like Eve, to stray from His path. What choice did you make?
- Do you value the wisdom that comes with age more than the allure of youthful beauty? Do you find yourself conversing equally with believers of different age groups or more with people close to your age?

- Considering the great deception that is coming (and which is already here to some degree), how are you equipping yourself to discern the truth?

## KNOWLEDGE PUFFS UP

Typically, with knowledge comes power, and power can bring position. Position can produce pride. While learning is obviously beneficial, left unchecked, increased knowledge can create pride. With the advent of AI technology, the speed at which one can gain knowledge to achieve power and position has never been greater. These tools enable us to search, analyze, catalog, organize, and filter vast amounts of information quickly and easily. We can even ask software to take numerous pieces of data and make judgments or devise conclusions for us. Therefore, the feeling of newfound success and power can be a breeding ground for pride.

In 1 Timothy 3:6, Paul provides guidance for selecting church leadership. He speaks against putting new converts into positions of authority, “lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.” The Apostle Paul understood the tendency that a newfound position can bring when not coupled with the wisdom and humility that come from the experience of walking with God. This principle of pride’s deception is found throughout Scripture.

*Proverbs 16:18 - Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

*1 Corinthians 8:1 - Knowledge puffs up (makes one arrogant).*

The attractiveness of knowledge and power can lure us from the true path. Scripture testifies that pride can blind us, causing us to believe we are more powerful than we actually are. This can also lead us to the dangerous false belief that we don’t need God. Paul’s words reveal the truth of those who consider themselves as being high and mighty due to their own ability:

*Galatians 6:3 - For if anyone thinks himself to be something [prideful], when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

It is deceptive to pride ourselves in our limited abilities and accomplishments when they cannot compare to who God is and what He has done. This is where recognizing the fear of the Lord is especially helpful: it allows us to keep the proper perspective of who we are and who God is. We cannot come close to measuring up to the One who inhabits eternity. On this point, it is essential that true wisdom remains our guidepost: the greatest knowledge and power the world offers cannot hold a candle to that which the Lord possesses.

*1 Corinthians 3:18-21 - Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, “He catches the wise in their own craftiness”; and again, “The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile.”*

*Jeremiah 9:23-24 - "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight," says the Lord.*

If you desire true wisdom, power, and wealth, know that these are only possessed by the One True God. In His infinite love and graciousness, the Lord does delegate wisdom, power, and authority to us who have humble hearts and desire to serve Him faithfully. These gifts from above allow us to sustain ourselves, bless others, and further the Kingdom of God. For example, Solomon was handed immense power when he became King of Israel. Despite the power available to him, he had enough humility to realize he needed help, which only God could provide. Even with his wealth, military strength, and a council of advisors and prophets, he cried out to the Lord.

*1 Kings 3:10-14 - The speech [Solomon's prayer for wisdom] pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. And I have also given you what you have not asked: both riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days."*

In a very similar way, artificial intelligence allows us to act like a king of a nation or a CEO of a company. These tools are essentially little workers ready to carry out any order we may have. What would be your command to a company of generals, state officials, and a host of other government officials? Again, we cannot let the power blind us. Like Solomon, we must first humbly turn to God since His word is more valuable than the best counsel the world can offer.

*Matthew 11:25 - I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things [wisdom of Heaven] from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes (the simple at heart).*

While artificial intelligence can be used to access and utilize knowledge for good, true wisdom on how to do this can only come from remaining connected to and dependent on the Holy Spirit. We must guard against the temptation of success to cause us to move without first praying for God's direction.

By continually seeking His presence, we have the best chance to remain grounded if we use AI and become successful. For Christians, there is no other way to wisely use technology that is growing increasingly smarter than the most intelligent human. It is truly remarkable that average people can access such ability, but we must not let this power blind us. We must continue to walk Yeshua's (Jesus') lowly path no matter how much knowledge we acquire, recognizing that humble awareness of self is a more sure path to holiness than our pursuit of knowledge.

Reflection:

- Have you ever felt more powerful after learning something new? Did you feel tempted not to share that information with others, fearing you would lose power if you did?
- How does the wisdom, power, and wealth the world offers compare to the wisdom, power, and wealth that the Lord possesses?
- Would you be prone to developing pride if you were suddenly launched into a position of authority, like a ruler of a nation or a head of a company? What steps would you take to guard against developing pride (think of Solomon's experience)?

## SELF-CONTROL

Self-control embodies the war that takes place within every Christian. It is the constant tug-of-war between the desires of our flesh and our spirit's ability to obey the voice of the indwelling Holy Spirit. We are tempted in a wide range of areas: consuming too much, speaking inappropriately, harboring lustful thoughts, and a thousand other places. It is a daily fight. We are imperfect in many ways, and it shows each time we give in to temptation. Though moral failure can be disheartening, it is evidence of the Holy Spirit actively working within us.

*Romans 7:19-23 - For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

Though this struggle is exhausting and may seem too much to bear, we may take heart that God is in control.

*1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

Thank goodness for God's grace! While He allows us to face trials to purify us and build qualities like perseverance and character, He also empowers us to overcome every temptation we face successfully. However, we are still responsible for putting on the Armor of God, denying ourselves, taking up our crosses daily, and following Yeshua (Jesus). If we do not, we expose ourselves to the enemy to entice us off God's path.

*Proverbs 25:28 - Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.*

Imagine that your heart is a city, surrounded by all sorts of evil things trying to get in. The walls function to protect the city from anything foreign trying to enter. You can picture the chaos and turmoil in the city with even one breach in its walls. Likewise, the man with no self-control, who cannot restrain his desires and passions, is constantly at risk of being controlled by them, not the One who truly has authority over the city. This individual has no defense when temptations approach, easily enter through the cracks.

*2 Corinthians 10:3-5 - For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

In addition to intact walls, capable guards are also needed to man the gates. In order to enter or exit a walled city, you would be forced to face these armed guards, meticulously checking everyone who seeks to enter. They have a standard to enforce, and if someone were found to be a threat to the city, they would not be allowed entry. This is the essence of Paul's message: we must be equipped to discern the thoughts that seek to enter our hearts, bringing each thought captive to the obedience of Christ. Without this vigilance, the enemy's evil thoughts may infiltrate our hearts and be manifested into actions.

One characteristic that could significantly enhance the Christian life today is self-control. This is especially evident in the lives of Christian youth when it comes to their electronics and media usage. Most people will recognize the age at which young people own smartphones has significantly decreased. In my daily drive to work, I've noticed elementary-age children buried in their smartphones morning after morning, as they are waiting to be picked up by the school bus. Some estimates state that most young people spend over eight hours per day on screens. Most people do not consider the power these children have in their possession. With unlimited access to the world in the palm of their hand, as their guardians, we must ensure we are not setting them up for moral failure.

While the risks of electronics usage are a concern, we must now recognize the dangers associated with using artificial intelligence.

Imagine a world where our children have access to tools that not only search the internet but can create anything their hearts desire instantly and without limits. AI can offer your child advice on difficulties they're facing, or serve as a virtual friend to them, influencing their decisions and thoughts profoundly. They are only limited by the prompt they enter. For those who find it hard to step away from their smartphones or take a break from social media, it will be extremely difficult for that person not to become dependent on the convenience, satisfaction, and support artificial intelligence can offer.

We must genuinely ask the Lord to reveal the answer to this question: "Is my child's character capable of using these powerful tools for Your glory?" While technology has its challenges, it can also benefit our lives when approached with discernment. The same is true for AI. The point is that we need to understand the risks and protect our families from the pitfalls that, unfortunately, many will fall victim to.

Reflection:

- As you read this section on self-control, can you identify any areas in your life you are currently struggling with? What steps have you taken to work towards overcoming this challenge?
- When you are faced with tempting thoughts, how do you "take them captive?" Share a moment when you were victorious in not allowing the thought to produce a sinful action.

- Consider whether anyone in your family has issues with self-control regarding technology. Provide specific examples that demonstrate this is a challenge. How would you be sure if you have been able to overcome this temptation?

## BOUNDARIES

Many do not understand the meaning of holiness. Though it is commonly understood to mean pure or perfect, these are actually the effects of holiness. Simply stated, when something is holy, it is separated from ordinary things. Holiness implies that boundaries must be drawn to distinguish what is holy (things separated for God) from what is unholy (things for common usage). Under the Old Covenant, the primary focus was upon physical items: sacrifices, objects for temple service, etc. However, under the New Covenant, the true significance is revealed.

*Romans 12:1-2 - I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

In Messiah, our goal is to cultivate holy minds and hearts that yield holy desires, words, and actions, all perfect offerings for the Lord. Our study of Scripture, prayer lives, worship, service, and obedience are sweet-smelling aromas to God. Even though our efforts cannot produce perfect offerings, we do our best and are thankful that Yeshua's (Jesus') righteousness is our ultimate covering. God determines the worth of our efforts by the love that inspired our actions.

How does this relate to artificial intelligence? If we as Christians choose to utilize this technology, we must allow the wisdom of God to determine our boundaries. Just as any tool can be utilized for good or evil, the same is true with technology. However, the stakes are higher now than ever before. As the usage and ability of artificial intelligence continue to increase, it will continue to rival human ability and allow much of our current work to be easily automated. This capability could also include the work of the ministry. In the days ahead, this issue will continue to be important for the Church to address.

We must pray as we ask questions such as the following:

- What role should technology play in the affairs of Christians or the Kingdom?
- Should artificial intelligence be used to write sermons, prayers, or worship songs?
- Could Christians seeking pastoral counsel find help with artificial intelligence?
- Should artificial intelligence be used to interpret Scripture or spread the Gospel?
- Are there certain tasks that should be reserved exclusively for humans and not outsourced to computers or machines?

Where do we draw the boundary lines? Consider the following scenario:

Perhaps God has placed writing a book on your heart, but you do not have access to a professional editor or an artist for your book cover. You might consider saving money until you have enough to hire an editor and artist. Alternatively, you may choose to take classes on editing and drawing and do the work

entirely yourself. Another option would be to wait on God to provide the need. None of these choices is the wrong one. We all must follow the conviction of our hearts. However, instead of delaying the project due to the lack of available talent or funding, AI can provide both with little time and at practically no cost, allowing your work to reach readers more quickly.

Is it wrong to outsource the assembly of the project God has placed on your heart to a machine? Is it equally wrong to outsource the project to a human editor or artist who may or may not be a Christian? After all, one may argue that the construction of the Tabernacle was entrusted solely to the children of Israel:

*Exodus 31:2-6 - See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you.*

What shall we say to Solomon, who solicited help from King Hiram of Tyre (a Gentile king) to build the Temple...

*1 Kings 5:1, 18 - Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, because he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, for Hiram had always loved David...So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried them; and they prepared timber and stones to build the temple.*

Did Moses have a heartfelt desire to build a perfect work for God? Did Solomon? Do you? These are essential questions we must take to prayer. The point is to be sure to ask!

Through artificial intelligence, it is possible to advance the Kingdom of God more quickly than before. The temptation might be to leverage these tools to advance the message of the Gospel as fast and as far as possible, or to generate wealth to fund the work of God. However, we must be cautious in outpacing the work of the Holy Spirit and His timing by acting in our strength according to our timing.

*Acts 16:6-7 - Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.*

Paul had a good desire to preach in regions of Asia, yet twice, the Holy Spirit directed him otherwise. For whatever the reason, a boundary was drawn by God for that time. Paul could have ignored the voice of God and moved forward in his strength anyway, but he understood the power of having the Holy Spirit perform the work and not trusting in his flesh alone.

*1 Corinthians 2:4-5 - My speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

The role of technology in the Church causes deep reflection for many, asking questions such as, “Are playing YouTube videos in a Church service a form of acceptable worship?” or “Is an artistic work more virtuous if produced exclusively by human effort versus that of a machine?” Each person’s perspective may differ, and it is through grace that we can bridge these gaps. What we view as acceptable today may change tomorrow, and vice versa. Unfortunately, there will probably be much disagreement across Christendom regarding how (or if) Christians should utilize artificial intelligence, whether in their individual lives or the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. This is why it is essential for each of us to seek the guidance of the Spirit on these issues. We must test all things, pray for unity, and do our best to be non-judgmental towards others in the faith.

Reflection:

- How high of a priority is it for your family to pursue a life of holiness for God?
- Would it be difficult for you to gracefully disagree with another believer about the ethical usage of AI in a ministry setting? How could all parties arrive at a place of unity?
- Have you considered and prayed about any boundaries your family might set regarding AI usage? Are there any areas you strongly feel that you would not use AI to assist you with?

## BUSYNESS

Humanity has always sought to invent devices to make life easier. Over the last century, there has been an explosion of innovation in this area. Today, those in developed nations have the luxury of things such as washing machines, cars, and running water, to name a few, all designed to enhance the quality of life and allot us with more time. Many of these modern conveniences are not available to most of the world and are often taken for granted by those who benefit from them. Billions worldwide still wash clothes by hand and walk miles daily to collect food and water. Interestingly, despite all our gadgets (things which should allot us more time in our day), people in third-world countries seem to have more personal time than those in first-world countries.

There is no denying that machines like the ones mentioned above have provided benefits to society, such as increasing life expectancy. However, despite having a more difficult life, past generations seem to have enjoyed more time with their loved ones than we do today. How is this possible?

I believe the problem lies with the fact that when we have more time available to us, we tend to fill the time with other activities if we are not careful. In addition, these new pursuits will probably require more money to make them possible, forcing us to work more. Before we realize it, our time is short once again. Whenever our lives become busy and demands increase, we must remain intentional with allocating our time. Even during times of great need and labor, Yeshua (Jesus) found it necessary to step away from the needs of ministry to pray.

*Luke 5:15-16 - The report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.*

Yeshua's example demonstrates that He understood the need for balance. Amid the demands of traveling, preaching, and serving, He knew that if He didn't take time away from His work, He wouldn't be able to remain connected to the Father for His needs. Following Yeshua's example, we need this time of rest. This is why the Lord gave us the gift of the Sabbath, a rejuvenating pause for our souls.

*Genesis 2:1-3 - Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.*

This principle may be one of the most neglected of all the teachings of the Bible. Did God rest because He was tired from the work of the previous six days? Of course not! At the beginning of time, God chose to reveal this divine pattern for His people. Just as a loving parent would sit on the floor beside their little child and demonstrate how to clean up their toys, the omnipotent God chose to work for six days and rest

for one. Even though society tells us to work nonstop to accomplish more and more, the people of God must take time to separate from our labors and rest in Yeshua.

How many of us truly take one day of our week to truly rest from our work and spend intentional time with the Lord? Many may find themselves caught up in a lifestyle of remaining continually busy. Suppose our tendency nowadays is to fill our schedules with events and appointments. What may be the result of utilizing AI technology that has the capability to automate most of our menial tasks? Will we remain busy? Will we discover new creative ways to occupy our time? Will we prioritize remaining competitive in an ever increasingly competitive world? Will we truly have more time? When our ability to accomplish more increases, we must be all the wiser in selecting the tasks we take on.

Consider another example from Scripture:

*Luke 10:38-42 - Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

We often spend more time doing for the Lord than being with the Lord. No doubt, we are to labor for the furtherance of the Kingdom, but this cannot be done at the expense of our peace and spending quality time with God. Let us not be so consumed with earthly matters that we neglect heavenly ones, which Yeshua calls the "good part." Despite the things that demand our attention, like Mary, we must intentionally find appropriate time to spend at the feet of Yeshua. In this sacred place, we learn, grow, and are spiritually nourished. This necessary and life-giving experience is challenging (if not impossible) for us to do while on the go. As we use technology to make our lives easier, we must guard against the temptation to stray from our walk with the Lord, filling our lives with other things that steal our valuable time away from His presence.

Reflection:

- How do you respond during sustained times of stress in your life? Do you find it difficult to turn away from the demands of work as Yeshua did to seek God's presence?
- Do you tend to be more like Mary or Martha? Can you recall a time you have played each part? How can you practically balance both of these roles?
- Is there a portion of your week that you dedicate to rest, family, and spending more time with God? If so, explain how this time helps you to maintain peace and clarity. If not, do you find rest to be a priority of a balanced Christian life?

## EXCELLENCE

As Christians, we are called to be our best. If our work is to represent Messiah, then we must aim to do all things well.

*Colossians 3:17 - And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus [Yeshua], giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

As we put forth our best effort in all we do, the Lord looks down on us and is pleased with our diligence. As Christians, performing greatly brings honor to His name. To achieve this goal, the Lord graciously bestows us with gifts and empowers us with His Spirit.

*1 Corinthians 12:4-11 - There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

According to this passage, the gifts are distributed to each for the benefit of all. Each person working together labors to edify the entire body of Christ. We can read Paul's words and see that the Holy Spirit is the giver of the gifts, actively working through each. Therefore, we have a great responsibility to partner with God and put what we have been entrusted with into action.

*1 Peter 4:10-11 - As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ [Yeshua], to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

We often associate *minister* with preaching or an official role within a church assembly. However, the word here simply means to provide for the needs of others through humble service. This could include the gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and other gifts for blessing those within the Church, such as hospitality or art (music, writing, etc.). The key is to ask and seek God's guidance for ways to serve the body, putting our gifts into action.

*2 Timothy 1:6 - Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

Though this verse refers to Timothy's gift of preaching, which he received through Paul's prayers, the principle is the same: we must be mindful of using the gifts God has placed in us. One way this is accomplished is through godly discipline. It is our duty to learn how to develop those gifts effectively through a lifetime of prayer, diligence, and practice.

*1 Corinthians 9:27 - But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

It is at this point where our challenge lies.

Artificial intelligence allows people who are not disciplined to create art in practically no time and with little skill. This in and of itself is not evil. For instance, it is possible to appreciate the beauty of a wood carving performed by a laser etching machine without a woodworker's skill. But, to the person who has God-given talent waiting to be developed, relying upon technology to produce the work will keep them from the discipline, dedication, and effort that would have once been necessary. The partnership between the individual and the Spirit mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 risks shifting to a collaboration with a person and a machine.

The desire to produce things quicker, easier, and cheaper already exists in our world. However, artificial intelligence increases our ability to do so exponentially. This tendency may cause us to overlook quality in favor of quantity to keep up with the pace of society. Consider how a master craftsman might take days to build a meticulously carved wooden chair by hand, while in the same amount of time, a factory worker oversees an assembly line that produces thousands of wooden chairs. One may be quick to praise the factory worker's productivity over the craftsman's single chair. Though both workers can serve unique purposes, due to the decades spent learning and working to perfect their craft, those capable of using their gifts to create artwork by hand without machines are due extra honor. This is not to diminish the efforts of the factory worker. No matter your calling, all things should be performed with excellence.

Consider once more the master craftsman and the assembly line worker. Now, imagine the factory worker operating the assembly line but possessing all of the craftsman's experience and wisdom. How much would this wisdom assist the line worker in managing to produce a high volume of quality chairs? Therefore, it may be possible to balance both wisdom and productivity well.

AI can enhance your work or perhaps make it more known to the world. However, by not working to develop your God-given gift, you can actually stifle the gift that you have been entrusted with, which, in turn, stifles the Spirit and the work of God. We must not stray from the path of discipline and the blessing that comes with it as we toil to achieve excellence in all we do for the Lord.

Reflection:

- Do you consider work as a form of worship? How does your labor bring God glory?
- Have you discovered your God-given gift(s)? How are you disciplining yourself to master your gift(s)?

- What are your thoughts on the balance of quality versus quantity? How would the capability of AI technology influence your current perspective?

## THE REPLACEMENT GOD

The prophet Daniel spoke of a time in the future when knowledge would increase (Daniel 12:4). Considering our world today, there has never been a time in human history when we have experienced such a rapid surge in learning. Through technology, humanity's capacity to gain knowledge and learn increases by the day.

The innovations of the last 150 years have allowed us to accomplish much. Farming that would once take weeks of back-breaking labor now takes a fraction of the effort and time through machinery. A two-to-three-week voyage across the ocean can be accomplished in only hours through modern aviation. Many diseases once considered a death sentence are now easily remedied with advancements in medicine. The opportunities brought forth through technology have also caused the rate of new millionaires to increase exponentially during the last century. Technology has led to significant accomplishments, and as a result, we now rely on it for many of our needs.

Many secular people in the technology industry are heralding artificial intelligence as "the new god," believing it will encompass all knowledge and have the ability to address the most difficult issues the world faces. Since AI is believed to have complete knowledge, many argue that it will therefore be able to offer perfect judgments when there are disagreements. It is being built to be perfect: all-knowing, all-powerful, and available anywhere on earth. To Christians, the concern is apparent: as technology continues to shape the modern world, there is a tendency to exalt *it* over God. Science books have become the bible of atheists, even though the laws of nature must bend when God speaks. Therefore, due to the power that increased knowledge can bring, we may be drawn to pursue the path of *knowledge* with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and not God.

In less developed countries where life is extremely difficult and the needs are significant, Christians must cry out in prayer for everything. Each meal is treated as though it might be the last. Waking up the following morning is not certain in a city engulfed in civil war. Many sicknesses can only be faced with prayer when no treatment is available. It is also in these types of locations where the greatest modern-day miracles are experienced. Dependence upon God is a necessity for daily survival in these places. This level of dependence should be the reality of every child of God.

Here is the challenge: if we already tend to trust too heavily in technology, how much more cautious must we be as artificial intelligence continues to be implemented in our world?

*Judges 2:7-8, 10 - So the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord which He had done for Israel. Now Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died when he was one hundred and ten years old...When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.*

The generation of Joshua walked in faith when they trusted the Lord in their fight for the Promised Land. They were well acquainted with hardship and dependency upon God. In contrast, the following generation ate the fruit of their parents' faith and prided themselves on it. They trusted in their ability, not realizing it was God alone who gave them the land. The result was God leaving them to rely upon their "strength and wisdom." The recurring theme of Judges is the repeated failure that comes from people "doing what was wise in their own eyes" (Judges 17:6, 21:25). They trusted in their wisdom, and it failed them catastrophically.

With the advancements of artificial intelligence, our ability to allow technology to answer our questions or solve our problems has grown astonishingly easy. Instead of waiting on the Lord for a needed answer to prayer, we can simply receive an answer to our question in as much time as it takes to dictate a sentence. In an instant, the storehouses of the world's knowledge base are accessed, and a solution is offered to us.

How often are we guilty of querying a search engine for questions we should first ask God?

*John 10:27 - My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. Psalm 23:1-2 - The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.*

The relationship God desires with His children allows us to hear His voice and speak with Him. He is our True Shepherd, and like sheep, we are all prone to stray, needing continual leadership. We come to Him for strength, direction, purpose, and protection. No amount of information can replace the abiding relationship that the death of Yeshua (Jesus) has made possible. As Christians, we must not forget to whom we must first turn for our needs and who the One God truly is. We must listen for and rely upon the voice of our Shepherd, Yeshua, over the wisdom of the world to know and remain upon the True Way.

Reflection:

- How would you assess your dependency on God? Consider deeply if there are aspects of your life you might trust in more than God's provision.
- Do you often find yourself thanking God for blessings we might consider ordinary, such as clean water, health, or family?
- Evaluating your family's current usage of technology, how would you rate your level of dependency? Would your family have difficulty unplugging for a period of time?

## WONDER

This afternoon, I was sitting on my couch and scrolling through the first few notifications on one of my social media accounts. I stumbled upon a post from a prominent robotics company showcasing their latest developments on one of the robots they're engineering. The video showed the robot dancing to music, its movements looking incredibly life-like. If you had seen just a silhouette, you may have had difficulty telling it wasn't an actual person.

As I was watching this video with curiosity and a certain degree of amazement, my eyes looked up at my television. My wife was watching a YouTube video of a cello instrumental playing worship songs and beautiful nature scenes. I saw a river with clear water flowing gracefully over rocks in a steady and peaceful manner. In that brief instance, I couldn't help but compare the two "marvels": the dancing robot and the stream's constant flow. It was in this moment that the title of this chapter was deposited into my heart.

*Ecclesiastes 1:7 - All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; to the place from which the rivers come, there they return again.*

The first time I read this verse, I was struck by the simplicity yet amazement of what it conveys. Nature is full of examples like this: the beating of a heart, the photosynthetic process, and the birth of a child, to name a few. Each of these marvels invites us to pause and take a moment to reflect on the One who created them all. Sure, science provides insight into how each of these processes works: we can study the electrical impulses that power the heart, the organic chemistry that allows plants to create energy, or the meiotic process of cells dividing in utero. Though we can go online and find a picture of the hydrologic cycle to see how water moves from the clouds, to the earth, into the oceans, and back again, science can only begin to explain *how it works*, not *why it works*. Creation and order require purpose, a question that transcends the disciplines of science.

How can the world operate in a perfect balance of synchronization as a clock does with its numerous gears, each moving at its own unique pace, yet affecting each one around it, directly and indirectly? Contrary to what evolutionists believe, no amount of time can establish order of that magnitude. This balance was established by the Maker of heaven and earth. He designed it, created it, and upholds it. Everything in this world for our senses to experience, the planetary orbits, oceans, rocks, clouds, seasons, and creatures, have been placed intentionally here and are constantly sustained by God's powerful, loving, and steady hand.

*Hebrews 1:1-3 - God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*

*Hebrews 11:3 - By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God [Yeshua], so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

These verses teach that God hasn't just created a world and stepped away, as a person might put batteries in a clock and check back only when they need replacing. No, the Father, through Yeshua (Jesus), has not only created the world from nothing, but continually upholds everything. Think about that word, everything. *Every thing*. Every day since the first week of creation, He commands the sun to rise and set (Job 38:12). Each night, He calls the stars out like an army, calling each by name to fill the night sky (Isaiah 40:26). He assigned boundaries to the oceans so that the waters would not go beyond His predetermined limits (Proverbs 8:29). To every creature He imparts His breath and Spirit (Isaiah 42:5). Yeshua, seated on the highest throne in the universe, looks down on all of creation, diligently sees everything, and holds it all together by His immeasurable power and love. There are a thousand other examples that demonstrate God's power and awesomeness for those choosing to search them out. It is there for all of us to admire, waiting for those willing to take the time and pause on our journey to smell the roses.

In our advanced modern societies, we are often separated from nature. Perhaps you live within the limits of a major city or in a high-rise apartment, finding the street lights dim the stars at night. The symphony of night creatures in a forest is replaced by police sirens and cars blaring loud music. In addition, kids nowadays typically spend more time indoors on computers than exploring outdoors, separating them even further from God's creation. When we immerse ourselves in a world that is primarily a product of what man has created, our capacity for wonder will be heavily influenced by our surroundings. We might admire a towering skyscraper, the grandeur of a luxurious cruise ship, or a bioengineered lifeform and think to ourselves, "We as humans are capable of anything!"

Without question, modern medicine, space flight, and robotics are all impressive feats of human discovery and ingenuity. I cannot begin to comprehend how many hours of research, engineering, and experimentation go into building a dancing robot from a box of parts, not to mention the software involved. With advances in artificial intelligence, our ability to design and solve problems has increased, unlike ever before. It would be an expected reaction for a teenager, or an adult for that matter, to stand in awe the first time they watch text-to-image software generate a stunning photorealistic picture from a few lines of text. This technology continues to advance in capability at exponential speeds.

However, we must realize that our innovation can only allow us to make things; we cannot create as God does. *Making* involves taking and manipulating what already exists to accomplish a specific purpose. *True creation*, which only God can do, comes out of nothing. For example, a robotics team can *make* a robot from a collection of wires, motors, and circuits, yet God *created* the copper, titanium, and silicon to make it possible. I can *make* a loaf of sourdough, but it is God who *creates* "bread" from the earth.

Nothing man can "create" compares to what his Creator has done. In His culminating act of creative love, God created man from the dust, breathed His Spirit in him (Genesis 2:7), and through the sacrifice of Yeshua, transforms us into a temple for His Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Yeshua paid an immeasurable price, leaving the extravagance of heaven and putting on the form of a servant to restore our fellowship

with the Father (Philippians 2:5-9). He *created* in us a new heart with new desires (Ezekiel 36:26). He goes to *create* a place for us when we meet Him again, when He *creates* the new heavens and earth (Isaiah 65:17). Humanity cannot and will never be able to come close to creating any of those things. Every marvel of the universe pales compared to the unfathomable and wonderful acts of the Gospel.

If we find ourselves neglecting to appreciate the awesomeness of God, consider how much more difficult it might be as we engage with a world driven by artificial intelligence. We cannot allow ourselves (or our children) to marvel at technological advancements in a greater way than we should marvel at what God has done through His creation, and the sacrifice of Yeshua. Regardless of our personal accomplishments or the best the world can produce, may we never lose our wonder.

Reflection:

- Is it challenging for you to surround yourself with the great outdoors and reflect on the miracles of creation? How often do you currently pause to consider the works of His hands?
- Humans have truly made remarkable technological advancements. Have you ever found yourself more in awe of something people have made than what God has created? In that moment, how did that sense of marvel compare to that of the works of God?
- Take a moment to ask God to reveal to you how He is currently sustaining the universe in the palm of His hands, moment by moment. Consider how He holds every piece of your life together in the same way.

# CONCLUSION

It is my genuine prayer that this short book has helped you reflect upon the many spiritual challenges AI presents to us as Christians. Once again, this book does not seek to turn you away from using AI but rather encourages you to think and pray regarding its use. Undoubtedly, many other implications have not been mentioned, and most certainly, more concerns will arise as this technology continues to develop. In time, I aim to expand this work as the Holy Spirit leads.

Brothers and sisters, we must remain alert as we enter this new period of history, when the access and manipulation of information are increasing, unlike ever before. In the pursuit of knowledge, we must remember that discernment and true application of that knowledge can only come through the Spirit of God. If we strive to remain connected with Yeshua (Jesus) throughout our Christian walk, I am confident His voice will guide us in truth.

If you or your family decides to begin learning how to use artificial intelligence and would like to join a community of like-minded believers on the same journey, I'd invite you to visit our website [www.magnif-ai.com](http://www.magnif-ai.com) to learn more.

As the times draw closer to Yeshua's return, the pull of darkness will continue to intensify. Deception will increase. The world will grow increasingly dark. The love of many will grow cold. If we are to remain faithful in these last days, we must continue to hold tightly to the hem of Yeshua's garment, praying for Him to keep us near as the narrow path leading to life becomes narrower.

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